



Testimony
Elizabeth Gara
Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA)
Before the Environment Committee
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The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA), which represents municipal, private and regional water companies, **opposes SB-229 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE ACCURACY AND APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATIONS.**

As drafted, SB-229 requires agencies to request a new Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) if it receives a petition from 100 people and construction on the project has not begun within five years after the evaluation was conducted. The EIE process is a comprehensive review which is important for critical projects but is time consuming and can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Given the cost and delays involved in preparing the EIE, it should only be required once for a project.

CWWA is concerned that this requirement would stall critical drinking water or other local projects that require permits, approvals and funding from multiple federal, state and local agencies. Projects involving the development or expansion of water supplies or infrastructure upgrades, including modifications to dams and treatment facilities, may require local inland wetland and zoning approvals, permits from the state Department of Energy & Protection, regulatory approvals from the state Department of Public Health and possibly the Army Corp of Engineers.

Unfortunately, it may take years for complex projects to obtain all of the needed approvals. In addition, projects dependent on grants and loans from various state, federal and local departments may be delayed waiting for funding approvals.

As a result, projects may not be approved to begin within the five year timeframe, through no fault of the water company or the municipality responsible for the project construction. Requiring the applicant to obtain an updated Environmental Impact Evaluation will create further delays in completing needed projects, increasing project costs and possibly jeopardizing available funding. This will undermine the ability of Connecticut's water companies to provide residents and businesses with safe, reliable public water supplies.

Given the potential impact of the bill on Connecticut's public water supplies, CWWA would like to be involved in any discussions moving forward.